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GUILDHALL LIBRARY:

ITS

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS,

BEING AN APPEAL TO THE

CORPORATION OF LONDON,

FOR ITS

RECONSTRUCTION.

BY

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Printed for Private Circulation.

LONDON:

W. H. & L. COLLINGRIDGE, CITY PRESS, ALDERSGATE STREET.

1869.

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GUILDHALL LIBRARY.

THE reconstruction of the interior of the Guildhall in a style of magnificence worthy of the City of London naturally invites attention to the condition of the other portions of the Corporation buildings of which this vast edifice is the appropriate vestibule. This is a matter that concerns not only the municipal body, but one in which the reputation and honour of the citizens at large are involved; and the time for action is certainly come if we desire to roll away the reproach that now lies upon us—that, whilst we possess a temple devoted to gastronomy, in which our civic hospitalities are dispensed with a profusion worthy of Lucullus, the adjuncts, assigned to law, literature, and corporation business proper, are squalid and inconvenient in a humiliating degree. Surely it is a striking anomaly that men of wealth and experience, willing to devote their talents and most valuable time freely and ungrudgingly to the public service, should be compelled to submit to an amount of accommodation inferior to the meanest vestry hall in the kingdom, so far as the requirements of personal comfort (I had almost said decency) are concerned. Nor is it wise to ignore the

fact that this state of things is calculated to furnish arguments against our capacity for administration which will be used with crushing effect when the question of our privileges is raised by the innovators who are chuckling over our short sight and our scanty wisdom. Whilst there is yet time, and before the revenues we now enjoy are taken from us, let us set our house in order; and if our grand old institution must be sacrificed to the Moloch of so-called *Reform*, let us leave to the despoilers at least some evidences that our energies have not been entirely devoted to unworthy tastes.

If, however, we entertain this question at all, let our thoughts rise to the magnitude of its just proportions and requirements; better remain as we are in dull obscurity, than provoke hostile criticism by puny efforts, dallying with necessities and postponing them to that "more convenient season" which *never arrives*.

The Corporation of this great city stands arraigned at the bar of public opinion; and it is grievous to reflect that the retrospect of the past does not present a more cheering theme for congratulation: London, the emporium of the world, the mistress of commerce, ought, under whatever aspect it is contemplated, to exhibit an example of progress in arts and letters, a beacon and a guide to the civilized world.

Doing full justice to the enlightened spirit shown in the restoration of the Guildhall, we should ever remember that by our custom of diverting it from its original and legitimate use (that of a place of meeting for the Citizens, in which matters of public interest may be discussed), and appropriating it to the purposes of festivity, we commit two mistakes; first, we interrupt

the ordinary uses of the Hall, and next, we seriously offend against that discriminating economy which it is our bounden duty to exercise as Trustees of the City's funds.

These offences we perpetrate and renew on all great occasions of banqueting: at these times we are compelled to erect temporary offices, the utility of which passes away with the event that required them; and it is notoriously true, that the cost of these transformations has reached, within living memory, to a sum more than sufficient to cover the outlay required for the erection of a suite of apartments for state and festive purposes, worthy of the position of this great City, and of offices of permanent utility, always ready to meet demands, however great; each being erected in point of appearance germane to that splendour which belongs to the important duties in connexion with our Imperial Policy, which the Corporation of London is not infrequently called upon by the State to exercise.

What man of common sense can reflect, without humiliation, upon the tawdry, tinselled embellishments, as costly as they were trumpery, of the preparations made for the entertainment given to the Sultan? Albeit, it is but scant justice to acquit those to whom the affair was entrusted of any deficiency that did not arise out of the circumstances of the case; indeed, the manner in which these evanescent delusions were performed, and the taste with which they were displayed, reflects the highest credit upon the ingenuity of the architect and decorator; nevertheless, the thought is very humbling to those who would fain have shown the Commander of the Faithful something

better in City architecture than scene-painting, architraves in pasteboard, Corinthian capitals in "papier-mâché" and Dutch gilt.

Facts and figures, particularly the latter, are tangible, and to escape the imputation of exaggeration, "let us speak by the card." In a return presented last year to the Court of Common Council of the sums expended upon such works will be found the following statement, viz: "For fitting up the Guildhall for Lord Mayor's day since the year 1800, £36,249 8s.; and for expenses incurred for special receptions and entertainments, £66,946 2s. 1d; repairs and alterations in and about Guildhall (exclusive of those works performed under the direction of the Guildhall Improvement Committee), £110,867 17s.; beyond this, £82,990 4s. has been absorbed by repairs to the Mansion House during the same period: making an aggregate of £297,054. Where are the objects attained by the outlay of these vast sums of money? The responsive echo is "Where!"

I leave the further consideration of the main question, to proceed with the special object of my solicitude.

As Chairman, for the second time, of the Committee to whom the affairs of the Guildhall Library are entrusted, I deem it to be within the range of my duty to endeavour to awaken the generous feeling of the Corporation on behalf of the requirements of this receptacle of civic literature. In the prosecution of this needful work, in addition to the cordial support of my colleagues, I look for much help from the citizens at large; and this not so much as a matter of choice as of sheer and absolute necessity, if we are to aim at maintaining our present rank in the social

scale. Whilst we have slept, cities and towns of relatively small importance have stolen a march upon us. They have their libraries and museums steadily progressing, keeping pace with the advances of science, and providing for their inhabitants retreats for mental recreation and literary improvement. These incentives to learning grow out of the enlarged education which is the peculiar feature of the present day.

It will no longer suffice to rest upon the narrow teachings of our immediate predecessors, for their standpoint is occupied, if not overstepped, by the lowest form of learning adopted in our national schools; and now, "the age is grown so picked," that the "toe of the peasant galls the kibe" of the peer.

In considering the origin of our civic educational institutions, it is remarkable how much has been done by private benefactors, and how little by the Corporation. But our business is with our own times. Let the shortcomings of the *past* be remembered only as they serve to increase the obligations of the *present*. There can no longer be found in the Courts of Aldermen and Common Council men who sympathize with the aphorism of a departed worthy of the former body, who declared his belief, that "the three R's" included "hedication enough for a City man." That race is replaced by gentlemen of enlarged and cultivated minds, equal to the requirements of the day; and among them, some whose erudition and talents shine conspicuously in the sphere of usefulness to which the appreciative goodwill of their fellow-citizens has raised them. By some of these the words of Prospero,

"My library is dukedom large enough,"

are *felt* and *understood*.

Whatever may be the justice of our claim for the advancement of learning in our day and generation, we may fairly boast of a desire for its diffusion; and to this end the free circulation of the teachings of the masters is the most obvious way.

To bring within the reach of the inquiring mind the results of study enshrined in an extensive and well-selected library is the great purpose of such aggregations of wisdom, and therein the man whose pecuniary means are unequal to the acquisition of the sources of knowledge necessary for the prosecution of his literary work finds the object of his desires provided for him. To such a man a library is a mine of wealth; and it should be the proud aim of those possessing such treasures, to offer facilities and give a hearty welcome to all whose researches have for their end the enlargement of human understanding, the diffusion of useful and elevating knowledge, and the consequent contentment and happiness of their fellow-men.

Let us now examine how far we have advanced in our duty in this respect;—where our defects lie;—and how we may best adapt ourselves to the wants of the age.

The exact time of the foundation of the first Library at Guildhall I have been unable to discover; but we have reliable evidence that it was spoken of by Whittington, and that both he and William Bury were amongst its earliest benefactors. John Carpenter, in 1441, also gave several important works during his lifetime; and we find in his will, proved in the Consistory Court of the Bishop of London, May 12, 1442, a copy of which is enrolled in the Hustings Court, the following directions: "If any good or rare books shall

"be found amongst the residue of my goods, which "by the discretion of Master William Lichfield and "Reginald Pecok may seem necessary to the *common* "*library at Guildhall* for the *profit of the students there*, "and those discoursing to the common people, then I "will and bequeath that those books be placed by my "executors *and chained* * in that library, in such form "that the visitors and students thereof may be the "sooner admonished to pray for my soul" (*Brewer's* "*Life of Carpenter*").

This "Common Library at Guildhall" was undoubtedly the then *national* library, and the citizens of London may fairly claim to be the parent of that monster bibliothèque now annexed to the British Museum; for it is an unimpeachable fact that the Government took up the idea of the formation of the latter at a comparatively late period (1753).

If I am correct, this circumstance bears out the asser-

* The practice of "*chaining books*," however, was not initiated by Carpenter, since we find in the "Philobiblia" a treatise on the love of books, written by *Richard de Bury*, *Bishop of Durham*, in 1344, directions for the proper reverence to be observed by readers. He reprobates the unwashed hands and dirty nails, and says, "Let there "be a due decorum with bookes that they be not thrown aside "without being duly closed." Anthony Wood says in his "Lives of Eminent Oxford Men," "In the time of Henry IV. a library was "built in Durham College, now Trinity College, and the books, "given by De Bury, were put into *pews* or *studies*, and *chained* to "them." The custom of chaining books was adopted in all parish churches, when, after the Reformation, they were supplied with a copy of the Bible for *common use*, and which Bible was *chained to a desk*. In the Paxton Letters, tempus Henry VI., we find complaints of dishonest retention of books borrowed. The Faculty of Medicine of Paris being asked by Louis the *Eleventh* to lend a book, required a valuable service of plate to be deposited with them as security for the due returning of the same.

tion of my friend Mr. George Norton, to whom the Corporation is so deeply indebted, that the City of London has been the pioneer of every great institution in this country, in further proof of which we may remind our readers that, *inter alia*, the Court of Common Council existed as a deliberative and representative assembly long before the establishment of Parliament itself.

The following extracts from our Records (furnished me by Mr. W. H. Overall, F.S.A.) also relate to this early library :—

Letter Book K, fol. 39, July 4, 1426: "Upon the "Petition of John Coventry, John Carpenter, and "William Grove, the Executors of Richard Whittington "and William Bury, the Custody of the New House, "or Library, which they had built, with the Chamber "under, were placed at their disposal by the Lord "Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty."

Letter Book K, fol. 219: "Terciodecimo Die Julii, "anno regni Regis Henrici Sexti, post conquestum "vicesimo secundo (1444), venit hic coram Thomas "Catworth, Maiore et Aldermannis Civitatis London, "Magister Johes Clipston, Capellanus et custos "Librarie Guyhald. Civitatis predicte, et quandam "porrexit supplicacoem sub tenore sequenti."

"To the full Honourable Lord and Souveraignes "Maire and Aldermen of the Citee of London, be- "seechith lowely your Prest and Bedeman Maister John "Clipstone, keper of your liberary atte Guyldehalle, "for as moche as it hath likede you for to take to hym "the kepinge and charge of the said liberary. Please "it to you, for to consider the greet attendaunce and "charge the whiche he hath with it, and in waytenge

"therupon to graunte that he may be made so sure "of his *lyflode*, *housyng*, and easement of the gardyn "which he hath for that occupacion atte this day, that "he be nat hereafter putte away therefro, ne noo part "there-off, nor noon other charge put upon hym so "that he may have more cause and occassion to pray "besyly for the *weele* of *you* and of the sayd *Citee*," &c.

The answer, in Latin, states that the request having been duly weighed, and the great merits and industry of the petitioner considered by the said "Maire and Aldermen," his prayer was granted with occupation for his whole life.

Letter Book R, fol. 58, March 6, 1553: "Item for "certeyn consideracons movyng the Court, yt is "agreid by the same that Sir John Aylif, Knight, nowe "keper of Blackwell Hall, shall have the whole "Lybrarye of the Guyldhall Colledge, aswell above as "beneth, from the feste of the Annuncyacon of our "Ladye nowe nexte comyng for the terme of his "naturall lyf, yeldyng therefore yerely duryng the "same terme to the Mayor & Coialtye & Cytezens of "this Cytie to th' use of the poore £v, so alweyes that "he use and occupye the same as a coen Mket howse "for the sale of clothes, and none otherwyse."

Stow, when writing of the building, afterwards called *Blackwell Hall*, says, "Adjoining this Chappell "was sometyme a fayre and large *librarie*, furnished "with Bookes pertaining to the Guildhall and Col- "ledge:—These Bookes as it is said were, in the "raigne of Edward the Sixth, sent for by Edward "Duke of Somerset, Lord Protector, with promise to "be restored shortly: Men laded thence three carries "(carts) with them, *but they were never returned.*"

The theft perpetrated by Somerset seems to have ruined the institution, for we hear of it no more; and all that remained of this once famous "*librarie*," was destroyed in the Great Fire of London (1666). The Corporation made no attempt to repair their loss from the hour of the above foray up to the time of the formation of a Committee, moved for by Mr. Lambert Jones in 1824.

From that period dates the restoration of the Guildhall Library, and it will be my part to trace the progress forward up to the present day. So far as the accumulation of books is concerned, our pace has been steady and satisfactory, and we now possess a more complete collection of all matters relating to the City of London than even the British Museum; the various departments of literature, science, and arts are fairly represented, whilst the antiquities of London proper are not insignificantly displayed in our infant museum.

This will be made manifest in the course of my review of the numerous reports made by the Library Committee during the space of *forty-five* years; and I would respectfully invite a perusal of them *in extenso*, as instancing an amount of zeal, fidelity, and talent rarely equalled, and certainly never excelled. The erudition and industry evinced by our predecessors in the preparation of these documents, the fulness of information, and the valuable suggestions contained therein, furnish alike a theme for our admiration and an example to those who, with ampler opportunities and a much wider sphere of action, are working in the same noble cause.

I venture to make this suggestion, firstly, because

the intrinsic literary merits of these reports will well repay a more thorough examination of them, but mainly as some apology to their authors, many of whom are still co-workers, for the mutilation I have been compelled to subject them to in the epitome to which the necessary limits of a pamphlet confine me. These reports can be readily obtained at the Town Clerk's office.

Reflecting with satisfaction upon the success which has attended the efforts of the Library Committee since 1824 ; — noting how largely their exertions have been encouraged by liberal contributions both from public and private sources ; — appreciating to its fullest extent the *contents* of the Guildhall Library, and doing full justice to the indefatigable ardour, efficiency, and courtesy of our librarian, who has made the most of his scanty opportunities, I still feel that these considerations tend only to bring into more prominent view the miserable accommodation afforded by the apartments into which these treasures are literally *stowed* away like so much lumber.

This evil has been for some years past increasing, and must still increase. The excellence of the additions daily made to our collections which, by attracting the notice of the literary portion of the press ;— fostered and brought into greater importance by the labours of such men as Norton, Riley, Blades, Reed, Orridge, *cum multis aliis ;*—must of necessity aggravate and intensify the difficulty of giving suitable facilities to students of all classes and creeds. And that this is no imaginary or exaggerated proposition of my own, I will, before proceeding to an analysis of the reports above mentioned, give one or two extracts

from the numerous articles which have recently appeared in the public press.

In the clever and instructive article headed "The Archæology of the Month" in the *Illustrated London News*, of February 6, 1869, will be found the following just and reasonable notice of our position:—

"*The Corporation library and museum are, it is notorious, ill-housed in what may be almost called a strip of a building on the south side of the Guildhall and a most inefficient depository it is for such treasures as are from time to time added to the collection. Now that the Great Hall has been renovated and roofed, it is surely fit that some new provision should be made for the antiquarian records and memorials of the City, which are so many illustrations of its history.*"

Again, we read in the *City Press* of last year:—

"*There is, we believe, in one department of the Guildhall a room full of valuable documents, which have never been overhauled or sorted since they were tossed away, pell-mell, immediately after a fire which destroyed a considerable quantity of them in the year* 1786. *This would probably not be the case were there proper accommodation for storing these documents. Mr. Roach Smith's collection of civic antiquities was lost to the City because there was no place to display them; and hence they fell to the lot of the British Museum, instead of being placed almost on the ground whence they were excavated. What can be more interesting than a well-arranged local museum, such as we have at our archæological societies' meetings in the provinces? We do not ask such extensive provision as may suit that omnivorous person the general reader, or such luxurious accommodation as the great circular room at the British Museum, but provision for a*

" *moderate number of readers, the want of which, possibly,*
" *had something to do with the small number which was*
" *urged against the formation of the library. The valuable*
" *autographs and written documents deserve to be better*
" *displayed. . . . . In short, we hope to have a proper*
" *building provided both for library and museum.*"

There are some remarks in *Trübner's Literary Record*, for August, 1866, which are so much to the purpose, and embrace the subject so fully, that they demand the thanks of every one who desires to see the Guildhall Library an object of pride, in the splendour of its outward appearance, and of comfort in the perfection of its internal accommodation.

" New York possesses the magnificent Astor Library,
" containing about 100,000 volumes in every depart-
" ment of literature, open freely to the public for
" reference, every day, from nine till five. It has also
" a City Library, free, open daily, from ten to four;
" an Apprentices' Library, a Medical Library, free,
" open from ten to ten; a Printers' Library, containing
" more than 4,000 volumes, also free; and now there is
" every prospect of another free library being added,
" on a large scale. Boston, by a Special Act of the
" Massachusetts Legislature, in 1848, was provided
" with a free public library, and had granted from
" the city funds 5,000 dollars a year for its mainte-
" nance. Immediately on its establishment, ener-
" getic citizens contributed largely in books and
" money towards the preliminary expenses, *and a*
" *citizen of London* (Mr. Joshua Bates), connected with
" Boston by business and personal ties, presented a
" sum of £10,000 sterling for the purchase of books.
" Throughout the United States libraries—readily ac-

" cessible to all in search of knowledge—are numerous,
" and one result is, that in intelligence, in acquaint-
" ance with literature, and knowledge of the best
" writers in their language, the American people are
" unequalled in the world. France possesses more than
" 100 public libraries, open freely to all comers, with-
" out distinction of person, rank, or country; Austria
" and Prussia together have nearly 90; Bavaria has
" 17; Belgium, 14; and other European kingdoms
" have a fair share. Until the passing of Mr. Ewart's
" Act, in 1850, for enabling town councils to establish
" public libraries and museums, England had the
" unhappy pre-eminence of being without a single
" strictly free public library. Paris now possesses
" seven perfectly free public libraries, Vienna has
" three, and Berlin two. The library of the British
" Museum was, and is still, we think, properly avail-
" able to readers only under certain restrictions. The
" libraries of Sion College and of Dr. Williams also
" were and are subject to restrictions which prevent
" their free use by the public. These three libraries,
" however, are, at the present moment, notwithstand-
" ing the activity of provincial towns, the only libraries
" available for inhabitants of this great city of London,
" and the restrictions to which we have referred, in-
" cluding the hours during which they are open, render
" them totally useless for the man of business, the clerk,
" the mechanic, and the artisan. Many smaller towns
" and cities throughout England have voluntarily
" taxed themselves under the provisions of the Act
" of Parliament referred to, and have established
" libraries, most of which are rendering immense
" service to the cause of education. *London, which, of*

" *all other cities in the world, owes most of its position to* " *the intelligence, education, and activity of its citizens,* " *stands, to our thinking, degraded and disgraced for its* " *apathy in this matter.* Is there no public spirit among " our bankers and merchants equal to that which has " made John Jacob Astor's name one to be carried " down to the remotest posterity, accompanied by the " thanks and blessings of those whose intellectual ad- " vancement has been promoted by his princely " liberality? . . . . Among the bankers, merchants, " and tradesmen of our City there are men who have " felt it an honour to enrol themselves in the ranks of " literature, whose fame hereafter will depend more " upon their contributions to literature and science " than to anything they may have done in the accu- " mulation of wealth; such men—honoured and re- " spected in all circles, possessing the confidence and " respect of their fellow-citizens—we call upon to be " up and doing in this matter; let them initiate " measures for the establishment of a Free Public " Library in this City—a library which shall be an " honour to the first City of the world. . . . . The " aim of such a movement as we speak of should be " to induce the Corporation of the City of London to " grant an eligible central site for a building, and to " contribute from its funds a sum towards the expenses " of erection and endowment, such sum to be supple- " mented by voluntary contributions; and we have " such confidence in our fellow-citizens, that we believe " individual subscriptions will be forthcoming by hun- " dreds and even thousands of pounds towards such an " object. Apart from the benefit which will result to

" the inhabitants of this City from such a library, a " movement in this direction on the part of the metro- " polis will set in motion similar active exertions " throughout the country; and we hope the day is " not far distant when our country will stand first " among the nations of the world in the activity of its " educational institutions, and the extent of its means " for imparting knowledge."

I might multiply these extracts, but I feel that to do so would be arguing a foregone conclusion. I will, therefore, only add one illustration from my own personal experience of the impression produced upon the mind of a cultivated American gentleman, a professor of high repute in one of the largest universities in the United States: Acting as his guide in viewing some of the remains of old London, I conducted him to Guildhall; charmed with the hall, he expressed his hopes that the other portions of our municipal buildings were in keeping with it: with a reticence prompted by a sense of humiliation, I stammered out some short excuse and kept his attention fixed upon the architectural features of our recent restorations, at the same time leading him towards the Library, where, after groping through the devious passages that lead thereto, I fairly introduced him: once in our sanctuary of learning the librarian with excellent tact drew off the attention of the visitor from the building to some of those gems of literature and rare treasures of antiquity under his care. The squalor of the building was soon forgotten in the admiration with which these objects were regarded. Full of delight, the professor thanked the librarian for the treat that he had afforded

him, adding good-humouredly, "*If we possessed such "jewels as these, we should provide them with a more "worthy casket.*"

* * * * * *

Let us now trace the origin and progress of our present Library.

On the 8th April, 1824, the first movement was made, when in the Court of Common Council it was resolved unanimously: "That it be referred to a "*Special* Committee to inquire into the best mode of "arranging, and carrying into effect *in the Guildhall*, "a Library of all matters relating to the City, the "Borough of Southwark, and the County of Middlesex."

"This Committee consisted of thirteen members, of "whom Mr. Rd. Lambert Jones was elected Chairman. "On the 2nd June, 1824, the Committee reported that, "after mature deliberation, they were of opinion "that the rooms then occupied by the Irish Society "would be the best adapted for the purposes of the "*New Library;* and that until these could be obtained, "or some other *permanent* situation decided upon, the "front-room by the Exchequer Court should be appro "priated to such Library: and that towards render- "ing the same as complete as possible, the sum of "£500 would be required for the outfit, and £200 "annually for other purposes."

They also certified "that they had viewed the "*muniment* rooms in the Town Clerk's office, and the "books, &c. in the Comptroller's office, and had "directed the Town Clerk to prepare a list, or schedule, "of all the books in his custody."

This report was agreed to by the Court, and referred back for execution.

On the 19th January, 1826, the Committee reported the progress they had made in acquiring a number of valuable books relating to the manners, customs, laws, privileges, and history of this City, the Borough of Southwark, and neighbouring counties, among them being a complete series of the *London Gazettes* from their commencement in 1665 to 1792, which they had purchased for the sum of two hundred and fifty guineas.

This report being agreed to by the Court, the Committee were further authorized to consider the propriety of providing a suitable place for the reception of such antiquities relating to the City of London and suburbs, as might be procured or presented to the Corporation.

We pass on to the 24th January, 1828, when the Committee reported that they had, with the assistance of Mr. William Upcott, one of the librarians of the London Institution, so arranged the Library that it might be opened for use, and recommended the appointment of Mr. William Herbert as Librarian. They further certified that they had directed a catalogue of the books and other documents to be printed and circulated.

The next report is dated 5th November, 1829, and is very interesting, as will be seen by the following extract:—

"Since the opening of the Library in June, 1828, "when it contained 1,380 different works, in 1,700 "vols., the number of its books has been augmented "to 2,800 vols., of which the donations amount to "nearly 1,050 vols. The number of prints now

"amounts to nearly 2,000, in addition to 100 draw-
"ings, consisting chiefly of Metropolitan Topography
"and portraits of eminent City characters, including,
"among the latter, a series of the Lord Mayors,
"Sheriffs, Recorders, &c. Amongst the most valuable
"accessions are upwards of 500 tracts, treating of
"London, many of them of great rarity and otherwise
"curious and valuable. These will, in time, consti-
"tute a most important feature, as there will be
"eventually concentrated in the Corporation Library
"a greater number of scarce articles on Metropoli-
"tan History and Topography, Police, Laws, Cus-
"toms, Biography, Buildings, and Antiquities, than
"will be found in any other library, public or private,
"at all times ready for immediate reference. Of larger
"works, the additions made to the printed catalogue are
"very considerable. They include, amongst the pur-
"chases, various newspapers, amounting to 380 vols.:
"complete sets of the *Gentleman's* and *European*
"*Magazines*, &c., &c. The donations comprise the
"whole of the publications printed by authority
"of Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Pre-
"servation of Public Records: sets of the Journals
"of the Houses of Lords and Commons, in 142 vols.:
"Reports of the House of Commons on the Port of
"London, Finance, The East India Company, and
"various other subjects, in 15 vols. fol.: and the Par-
"liament Rolls, in 6 vols.;—the whole given by Mr.
"Alderman Wood: nearly 100 vols. of books and
"tracts, all relating to London, given by Mr. Deputy
"Whitby: a **donation** *of* 100 Guineas and
"several books by Mr. Philip Hurd: and some vols.
"relating to London, presented by Henry Wood-

"thorpe, Esq., Town Clerk: a very fine set of "the Archæologia of the Society of Antiquaries, "in 21 vols.: the Antiquarian Repertory, in 4 "vols.: Higden's Polychronicon, and other scarce "works, presented by the late sheriffs, Andrew Spot- "tiswoode, Esq., M.P., and Ed. Archer Wilde, Esq.: "40 vols. of valuable legal and other works, the gift "of Henry Butterworth, Esq.: Hakluyt's Voyages "and Travels, 5 vols., by W. Bolland, Esq.: the "Parliamentary History, in 24 vols, with several scarce "tracts, &c., by William Lewis Newman, Esq., City "Solicitor: and various privately printed and unpub- "lished works and manuscripts from Sheffield Grace, "Esq., Sir Richard Colt Hoare, Bart., Edward "Tyrrell, Esq., &c., &c. 'The additional book-cases "'to accommodate the continual increase of the Library "'completely fill the principal room, and much of the "'ante room; and it is probable that both will be "'entirely filled before the close of next year.'

"In addition to the collection of books, &c., *the "foundation is laid for a civic museum*, and towards this "desirable object Mr. Cuerton has made a donation of "several Roman and other antiquities discovered in "digging the foundations of the New Post Office in "St. Martin's-le-Grand; several specimens found in "the excavations for the New London Bridge and the "Guildhall Chapel have also been forwarded to us."

On the *25th Jan.*, 1831, the Committee were directed to revise and compile the pocket-book and list of the Common Council, in place of the late Compiling Committee.

On the *12th May*, 1831, it was referred to the Library Committee "to confer with the City

"Lands Committee and report whether there are "any premises attached to and connected with the "Guildhall which can be converted into a *handsome* "*and capacious Library worthy of the Corporation*, or any "ground similarly situated on which such a *Library* "can be built, and whether any and what further "grants are necessary for rendering the Library more "extensively useful."

This reference appears to have slept awhile, and no further report was brought up, until the 5th April, 1832, when, *inter alia*, the Committee state that "the present "Corporation Library contains 3,600 vols., including "1,200 tracts;" and that the works treating of London or of English history and topography requisite for its illustration, which constitute the bulk of the Library, are "numerous beyond perhaps any library in the "kingdom excepting the British Museum; and the "City Library must eventually with moderate efforts "exceed in this particular department of literature "even that great national repository." They further state that "the utility of the Library, as one of refer- "ence, is daily more apparent, as proved, not only "by the resort of members of the Corporation on "occasions of debate and for other purposes, but also "by the visits it receives on account of the curious "works it contains from several writers who have "borrowed largely from them."

On the 12th April, 1832, the constitution of the Committee was changed from thirteen members to a *Special Committee*, consisting of the Lord Mayor, six Aldermen, and thirty Commoners, one-half of whom were to be removed every year, but to be eligible for re-election.

On the same day it was resolved, "that the Library "should henceforth be opened to the members of the "Court from six until nine o'clock in the evening." (This subject had been previously mooted on 17th December, 1829, and a report from the Committee subsequently presented recommending its adoption, which, however, was at that time rejected by the Court.)

At the same Court it was, upon the motion of Mr. W. Pritchard, resolved and ordered, "That it is the "opinion of this Court that the Library should be "established *on a scale more worthy of the Corporation* "and calculated to render it more extensively useful "as a Library of reference to the members of this "Court, and that it be referred to the *Library Com-* "*mittee* to consider the best means of carrying this "opinion into effect;—the extent to which the Library "should be enlarged; the regulations necessary for its "conduct; and the expense which in their opinion "will be incurred in carrying their recommendation "into effect."

On the 11th October, 1832, the Committee reported in favour of "enlarging the present Library by "extending the same over the passage leading from "the Measure Office to the Hall-keeper's House at an "expense not exceeding £1,245," which was agreed to.

On the 1st August, 1833, the Committee were authorized to draw £1,050 for the purpose of fitting up the new Library and constructing a staircase leading to the same from the Hustings in the Guildhall.

On the completion of the work above named an elaborate report was presented on the 30th July, 1835, setting forth that the intended access to the Library

had not been carried out, but that an entrance had been constructed from the porch; and further that the cost thereof and other matters deemed necessary had exceeded the sum agreed upon by £451 2s. 11d., making a total of £2,721 3s., which they were empowered to discharge. They further say that since their report of April, 1832, an increase to the amount of 1,200 vols. had taken place, and that the whole collection was then 4,800 vols.

The Committee take credit for giving a preference to all books relating to the affairs of London; but, with commendable taste, finding that many other subjects of information were required, they state, "We have "obtained, so far as our funds would admit, the works "of all the best English historians, ancient and modern, "treatises on the Constitution, parliamentary works, "and a collection of dictionaries, glossaries, &c., so "important in every public library." They gracefully acknowledge the numerous donations by which the library has been enriched (*amongst others a donation of* £100 from Sir James Shaw, Bart., chamberlain, for the purchase of books), and they close their interesting report by adding, "That with the view of carrying "out the resolution of this Honourable Court of the "12th April, 1832, for establishing a Library *worthy* "*of this Corporation*, &c., we have appointed a Sub-"Committee to inquire into what department of science "and art it is particularly desirable the collection "should be extended."

The report next in order bears date *23rd February*, 1837, the subject being the extended scope of the Library, which was agreed to, and the sum of £1,000 voted for that purpose. Numerous arrangements were

made at different times for the guidance of the Committee as to the times of opening and closing the Library, and for the better ordering of the same. These matters, although very useful, do not belong to this inquiry.

On the *5th November*, 1839, it was resolved and ordered, "That the Committee report to this Court "the propriety of selecting and placing in the Library "all official and autograph letters and papers from "royal, noble, and distinguished persons, belonging to "the Corporation and now in the hands of any of "their officers; and also the propriety of removing "from the custody of the Chamberlain to the Library "the sword presented to the Corporation by the late "Lord Viscount Nelson after the battle of the Nile."

On the *1st June*, 1840, the Committee report that the new library has been opened, and a classification of the books made, by which those relating to the City are separated from the miscellaneous works. They also state that a room has been fitted up as a *MUSEUM* for such antiquities as have been or may be discovered in the City and Liberties by the various excavations then going on. The books which in 1828 amounted only to 1,700 volumes now reach the number of between 9,000 and 10,000 volumes, including an extensive series of ancient civic triumphs called "City Pageants," as also Royal Processions, serving to illustrate the progressive alterations and improvements in manners, buildings, and society in the metropolis; accounts of the Great Plague, the Great Fire, and other incidents. They also set forth a list of benefactions, some of the highest interest and value, and they recommend that the sword presented by Lord

Nelson should be deposited in the Museum connected with the Library.

In the same report is the following recommendation, to which I beg to direct particular attention, viz. :—

"*We are of opinion and recommend that this Honourable "Court should direct the several Officers of the Corporation "to give up to the Library all official and autograph letters "in their possession from royal, noble, and distinguished "persons, which are not longer required for the purposes of "the Corporation in their respective departments.*" This report was agreed to in its entirety.

29th October, 1840, the Committee report: "That "in accordance with your instructions to examine "and report on the present state of the records "of the Corporation, and as to the best mode of "facilitating the use thereof,—we appointed a sub-"Committee, who have reported to us that they have "viewed the *old* and *new* muniment rooms attached "to the Town Clerk's Office, and they say that it is "desirable in the first place that all the documents and "papers in the custody of the Town Clerk should be "completely arranged and catalogued, by competent "persons, at an expense of £400. We, agreeing there-"with, recommend the same to your honourable "Court."

The above report was considered on the 3rd December, 1840, when the recommendation for "repairing, arranging, and indexing" the Records in the custody of the Town Clerk was referred back for reconsideration, but subsequently agreed to on the 27th October, 1842.

On the same day the following motion for the establishing of the circulating portion of the Library,

which has since been effected with so much success was considered and *rejected.*

"That it be referred to the Library Committee to "consider whether certain books may not be taken out "of the Library by members of this Court, under "similar regulations to those adopted in the Universi- "ties of Cambridge and Oxford."

And here I would mention, that at this particular time the Committee evinced considerable jealousy in the selection of gentlemen appointed to aid them in their duties; for we find that, on the 21st January, 1841, and again on 20th January, 1842, several Aldermen and Commoners were removed, by order of the Court, for non-attendance; a proceeding which, I regret to add, if carried out at the present day, would leave the Library Committee with scarcely an Alderman to grace their deliberations. I forbear to particularize the several Wards so distinguished, in the hope that the simple reference to the fact may induce the present representatives of the same, in the upper Court, to devote some portion of their time, and all their talent and experience, to the interesting and highly responsible (if unobtrusive) labours of the Library Committee.

It would seem that the affairs of the Library had about this time attracted some attention; for on the 27th October, 1842, the Lord Mayor laid before the Court a communication from the French Ambassador, transmitting a letter from the Minister of Public Instruction in Paris, presenting to the Corporation the following work, in fourteen volumes: "Description de l'Egypt; ou, Recueil des Observations et des Recherches qui ont été faites pendant l'Expédition de l'Armée

Française. Publié par les ordres de sa Majesté l'Empereur Napoléon le Grand. Paris, 1809-22.

The Court ordered the same to be duly acknowledged and the volumes deposited in the Library.

19*th December*, 1842. Return to an order of the Court of Common Council of the 16th December, 1841: "That the Library Committee do make a return of "their duties and authorities, and the buildings and "matters exclusively under their direction."

"1st. To superintend the Library of the Corporation "in the Guildhall, and to appropriate out of the City's "cash, under an order of the Court of Common Council, "2nd June, 1824, the sum of £200 per annum in the "purchase of books, &c."

"2nd. To direct the preparation and printing of a "Catalogue of the Library."

"3rd. To appoint a Librarian."

"4th. To direct the compilation of the pocket-books "sent annually to the members and officers of the "Corporation."

"5th. To apply under the order of the Court "27th October, 1842, the sum of £400, for *repairing*, "*arranging*, and *indexing* the City's Records in the "*custody* of the Town Clerk."

(Let us draw breath here. The plain and simple inference from this statement is, that the City's *Records up to this time were going to decay, indicated by their requiring repairs.* That they were a chaos of *confusion without arrangement*, and that they were totally useless for reference for want of the *proper indices.*)

"6th. The properties, buildings, and matters under "their direction are the Library, and the rooms in the "Guildhall used for the purposes of the Library, which

" are in the custody of the Librarian when the Library " is open for admission, and at other times in that of " the keeper of the Guildhall."

We have next in order a Resolution of the Court, 27th February, 1843, which is highly gratifying, on account of the evidence it displays of its anxiety to still further utilize the Library by diffusing its contents for the benefit of other municipal institutions. Resolved: " That it be referred to the Library Com- " mittee to consider the propriety of causing one copy " of all works of which there are duplicates in the " Library at Guildhall, to be transferred to the City of " London School, with a view to encourage and assist " in the formation of a Library for the use and benefit " of the masters and pupils of that institution." This was agreed to 20th June, 1843.

30th March, 1843, the Library Committee showed the high sense they entertained of the value of the Civic Records, by refusing an application of Mr. Alex. Pulling for permission to have access to the original Charters in the custody of the Corporation for the purpose of taking copies thereof for publication. They " regretted " that they could not recommend the Court to comply " with the request of Mr. Pulling, inasmuch as they " were of opinion that, if it should be deemed ex- " pedient to print or publish the several Charters " granted to the Corporation of London, it should be " done by the express order and at the expense of the " Court, and, of course, under the inspection and " direction of the law officers of this City."

On 20th June, 1843, the Committee report the purchase of a deed, with an autograph of *William Shakespeare*, in the following terms:—

"A catalogue having been laid before us of a col-
"lection of autograph letters, including *Shakespeare's*
"*autograph* affixed to a deed of bargain, and sale, with
"the seals attached, of a house in Blackfriars, pur-
"chased by him from Henry Walker, dated 10th
"March, 1612, to be sold by public auction by
"Messrs. Evans, of Pall Mall, on the 17th ult. (May,
"1843), and the said deed appearing to be one of deep
"interest, and more particularly to this City: Between
"Henry Walker, Citizein and Minstrell, of London, of
"the one partie, and William Shakespeare, of Stratford-
"upon-Avon, in the Countie of Warwick, Gentleman,
"William Johnson, Citizein and Vintener, of London,
"John Jackson and John Hemyng (Shakespeare's
"fellow-comedian and one of the legatees in his will),
"of London, Gentlemen, of the other partie, regularly
"enrolled in the Rolls Chapel, having the following
"endorsement, 'Scaled and delivered by the said
"William Shakespeare,* William Johnson, and John
"Jackson, in the pnce of Will Atkinson, Edward
"Ouery, Robert Andrewes, scr., Henry Lawrence,
"servant to the same scr. We were strongly urged to
"purchase the same, and we have the gratification of
"being enabled to report to your Honourable Court
"that the deed was obtained (by the exertions of
"Richard Lambert Jones, Esq.), for the sum of one
"hundred and forty-five pounds, a smaller sum than
"was anticipated." Agreed to.

* This signature is one of the best of the six autographs of the immortal Bard in existence, acknowledged to be *genuine*, of which three are attached to his will in Doctor's Commons, one in Montaigne's Essays in the British Museum, and one to a mortgage-deed of the 11th March, 1612 (this latter deed was purchased by the British Museum on the 13th June, 1858, for the sum of £315).

12th December, 1844. Report of the progress made in the arranging and indexing the Records of this City, in the custody of the Town Clerk, and for a grant of the furthur sum of £500, for the purpose of proceeding with the same. Agreed to, and referred back for execution.

On 13th February, 1845, upon the resignation of Mr. W. Herbert (who was granted a pension of £75 per annum), Mr. W. T. Alchin was appointed Librarian at a salary of £50, in addition to his emolument for indexing the Records.

Several attempts were made to provide suitable accommodation for the museum, as will be seen by referring to minutes of the Court of 13th February and 29th May, 1845; and on the 25th September, of the same year, it was

"Resolved and ordered—That it be referred to the "Library Committee to consider whether any and "what portion of the buildings attached to the Guild-"hall (other than the Crypt) can be appropriated to "the purposes of a museum." And on the 26th March, 1846, a recommendation for fitting up the ante-room of the Library for antiquities and works of art, at an expense not exceeding £200, was agreed to.

17th September, 1846. Letter of Lord Cowley, presenting, at the desire of Count Rambuteau, Prefect of the Seine, a copy of the history of the Hotel de Ville, Paris; ordered to be acknowledged by the Town Clerk.

Nothing can be more gratifying than this recognition of the Guildhall Library as an accomplished fact, which must surely provoke our desire that the institution may be made worthy to take rank among the most famous libraries of Europe.

25th March, 1847. Report of the Committee of the progress made in arranging and indexing the Records of the City, and for a grant of a further sum of £500 for the purpose of proceeding therein (the grant of the 12th December, 1844, being exhausted), and for indexing old account-books in the custody of the Chamberlain, at an expense not exceeding £200. Agreed to.

7th October, 1847. Report of Committee on the state and progress of the Library, calling attention to the munificent present of about 400 volumes of Hebrew and Rabbinical literature made by Philip Salomons, Esq. These works have since been catalogued by a reader of the Synagogue in St. Alban's Place.

The report goes on to mention other valuable donations from the Commissioners of Public Records, the Trustees of the British Museum, the Parker Society, Sergeant Merewether, &c.

The Committee further certify that "agreeably to "the resolution of the 26th March, 1846, the ante-"room of the Guildhall has been fitted up as a *museum*, "and we have the pleasure to report that a most "valuable addition has been made to it by the Royal "Exchange and Gresham Trust Committee, of a large "collection of curiosities found in 1841, whilst exca-"vating for the erection of the new Royal Exchange, "consisting of specimens of Samian ware, which are "being arranged and classified by Mr. Thomson, "Librarian of the London Institution, under the direc-"tion of W. Tite, Esq., who has kindly undertaken "to prepare a descriptive catalogue of the same."

The report was agreed to, and the following resolution adopted, viz., "That this Court, referring to that

"part which relates to the *munificent present* by Philip "Salomons, Esq., to the Guildhall Library of four "hundred volumes of Hebrew and Rabbinical works, "agree with the Committee in the expressions they "have applied to this liberal gift, and approve of the "directions given for its deposit, resolving, moreover, "that the thanks of this Corporation are due, and are "hereby given to Philip Salomons, Esq., for his "splendid donation, and further, that this resolution, "be recorded in the Minutes of this Court, and espe- "cially communicated to Mr. Salomons by the Town "Clerk."

On the 26th May, 1849, upon a report from the Committee of the progress made in indexing the Journals and Repertories, the following arrangement was made with Mr. Alchin, viz.: that he be paid £150 per annum as Librarian, and a further sum of equal amount for his services with respect to the Records.

October 3, 1849. "Resolved and ordered, that it be "referred to the Library Committee to consider and "report whether by any and what means the advan- "tages of the Library of this Corporation may be more "extensively enjoyed by its members." This resolution is another and pleasing proof of the estimation in which the Library was even twenty years ago regarded by the Court, and keeps alive the hope that all these generous aspirations will culminate in the consummation of the great design we are promoting.

March 14, 1850. The Committee report a present by H. B. Hanbury Beaufoy, Esq., F.R.S., of a cabinet of London tokens, and ask for authority to print a catalogue thereof. Resolved unanimously, "That this Court, deeply impressed with feelings of

"gratitude and admiration for the munificence mani-
"fested by H. B. H. Beaufoy, Esq., in his invaluable
"benefactions to the City of London School, and his
"gift to the *City Museum* of an interesting and unique
"collection of London tradesmen's tokens, request
"that he will allow some artist, of his own nomination,
"to execute a bust of him at the expense of this
"City; to be placed in the council-chamber as a last-
"ing memorial of the respect of this Court, and of the
"high estimation which his fellow-citizens entertain
"of his generosity and kindness."

On 29th July, 1850, the Committee presented a report on the reference as to extending the usefulness of the Library, recommending the establishment of a *Circulating Library*, and submitting rules for its management. On 26th September, 1850, this was negatived by the following motion:—

"That the Library of this Corporation being a library
"of reference, it is not desirable that any of the books
"should be allowed to be circulated, or be lent out
"of the library."

(The subject was again agitated on 3rd March, 1853, with a like result.)

On 16th December, 1852, a voluminous and interesting report upon the progress of the Library was presented, in which it was stated that upwards of 1,000 works had been added since 1842, and that a catalogue had been prepared of the unique collection of *Tradesmen's Tokens* relating to London, Westminster, and Southwark.

On 26th May, 1853, the Committee reported on the reference relative to the establishment of a Free Library and a Free Circulating Library:—the subject being

remitted for further inquiry; they, on the 13th October, 1853, brought up a second report, in which the matter was fully gone into. The Committee warmly supported the proposition, and gave it as their opinion—

"That the establishment of a free library and a free "circulating library would be the means of introducing "the works of the most approved authors to the homes "and firesides of the inhabitants of this City, give an "impulse to diligent and thoughtful reading, and "encourage the pursuit of studies, the result of which "would extend the boundaries of human knowledge, "and national civilization."

With a view to carrying out these objects, they further suggested that an Act of Parliament should be applied for; and that previous thereto the Lord Mayor should be requested to convene a public meeting of merchants, bankers, and other inhabitants of the City, to procure their aid and support to such an undertaking, and thereby give effect to Her Most Gracious Majesty's declaration in her speech at the conclusion of the previous session of Parliament, expressing her desire to extend and improve the national education, to develop and encourage industry, art, and science, and to elevate the moral and social condition, and thereby promote the welfare and happiness of her people.

This Report was again considered on the 3rd November, 1853, and agreed to.

No further steps appear to have been taken under this reference.

On the 11th October, 1855, however, after the passing of "The Public Libraries and Museums Act, "1855," the Common Council requested the Lord Mayor to convene a public meeting of all persons

rated to the Consolidated Rate, to determine whether its provisions should be adopted within the City of London. A meeting was accordingly held at the Mansion House, under the presidency of the Lord Mayor, on the 5th November, 1855, at which several members of the Corporation took an active part, but ultimately the proposition to establish a Free Library in the City was rejected by the ratepayers.

Whilst upon this subject I must in justice refer to the pamphlet issued about this time by Charles Reed, Esq., F.S.A., Deputy, entitled, "Why not; a "Plea for a Public Library and Museum in the City of "London without Taxation," in which their establishment was ably advocated.

On the 17th January, 1856, an application was made to the Court from Sir Henry Ellis for any printed copies that could be spared of Mayoralty Proclamations since 1675 for the Library at the British Museum, which request was complied with.

February 28, 1856, it was resolved and ordered— "That the Library Committee do consider and report "whether any and what means can be adopted to "render the Library more available for the use of the "Corporation and the Citizens of London, and also "what arrangements will be necessary for carrying the "same into effect."

This resulted in the establishment of the Circulating Library, for on December 18, 1856, the Committee brought up a report recommending arrangements to be made for readers in the Library, and suggesting that the privilege of taking home books should be confined to members of the Corporation. Agreed to.

June 11, 1857. The Committee further reported

that they had established certain rules as the basis of a Circulating Library, and had appointed a Sub-librarian, at a salary of £105, and directed the Librarian to select from the catalogue such of the works as were not of standard reference, the replacing of which in case of loss would be impossible or very difficult. This was accordingly done, and upwards of 3,000 volumes were set apart for the purpose.

On December 10, 1857, the Committee reported that, with reference to the *Circulating* Library, the experiment had fully answered their expectation, the number of readers in the Library and of books issued having steadily progressed. (A table showing this increase from its commencement in 1857 to the end of last year will be found in the Appendix.)

May 6, 1858. A letter to the Corporation, from the Right Hon. Sir John Romilly, Master of the Rolls, was read, requesting that Mr. H. T. Riley, M.A., Barrister-at-Law, might be allowed to transcribe manuscripts in the custody of the Town Clerk, for the purpose of assisting in the publication of a history of this country. Referred to the Library Committee to consider and report.

June 10, 1858. The above application was agreed to, and ordered accordingly.

This concession has led to most important literary results, and was the means of affording to Mr. Riley a mass of valuable materials, which has culminated in the publication to the world of such works as the *Liber Albus*, *Liber Custumarum*, *Liber Horn*, *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, *Liber de Assisa Panis*, and more recently, in that magnificent work, "*The Memorials of London*," which has attracted the attention and elicited the most

flattering encomiums from all sections of the press. In the latter we have glimpses of the hidden wealth concealed amongst our hitherto comparatively unused muniments, which we hope may yet bear greater fruits, for surely here are the true elements of our national history. The quaint word-painting of the several writers, portraying as it does the manners, habits, customs, and arts of our forefathers, has been so faithfully rendered by the accomplished compiler, that both deeds and doers are brought vividly home to our mental perceptions.

July 23, 1860. Upon a recommendation of the Library Committee, the Court directed that a copy of the translation of the *Liber Albus* should be sent to every member of the Corporation, and the Committee were empowered to purchase the same.

July 26, 1860. A report of the *City Lands Committee* was agreed to for effecting certain alterations to the existing Library, at a cost of £750.

(The execution of this scheme would simply have added an additional story to the present Library, but, thanks to a more discriminating afterthought, it was never carried out.)

April 18, 1861. The *City Lands Committee* submitted a further plan for affording increased accommodation to the Library, by the adaptation of the rooms over the Comptroller's Office, at an outlay of £3,000.

(This received the sanction of the Court; but by the subsequent action of the Guildhall Improvement Committee it was fortunately delayed, and the objections to it are so patent to every member of the Library Committee who has attended to his duties, that it is not likely to be again revived.)

In the course of his researches Mr. Riley discovered that a portion of the *Liber Custumarum* had been abstracted from the City's Archives, and on the 21st March, 1861, it was resolved and ordered: "That it "having been ascertained that the missing portion of "the *Liber Custumarum*, which was formerly in the cus- "tody of the Chamberlain of the City of London, has "been found among the Cottonian Manuscripts of the "British Museum, it be referred to the Library Com- "mittee to inquire and report as to the time and the "circumstances under which this important manuscript "was removed, and further to consider and recom- "mend to this Court what steps, if any, should be "taken to procure the restoration of the same by "the Trustees of the British Museum."

On the 18th September, 1862, the Committee reported that the Trustees of the Museum had expressed their inability to surrender the folios abstracted from the above Record.

(This subject refers to the pilferings of Sir Robert Bruce Cotton, Bart., who having, in the early part of the seventeenth century, borrowed several of the City's archives under various pretexts, retained them for a considerable period; and they were only restored to the Corporation after much pressure, and then in a defaced and mutilated condition.)

July 25, 1861. Referred to the Committe "To "consider whether it is desirable to exhibit the various "works of art and objects of interest belonging to this "Corporation at a meeting or *conversazione* to be held "within the Guildhall; and if so, then to consider the "propriety of seeking the aid and assistance of per- "sons and public bodies possessing art treasures; also

"to consider the regulations and arrangements re-
"quisite, and the time most suited for holding the
"meeting, and to report thereon with an estimated
"cost of the same."

September 19, 1861. With reference to the above, the Committee report "that the proposed exhibition "would be desirable and calculated to promote the "intellectual gratification of the citizens of London, "but that under existing circumstances the present "is not a fitting time."

It is much to be regretted that the Corporation did not avail themselves of the opportunity thus afforded them; the more so as shortly afterwards one of the principal Livery Companies (the Ironmongers) adopting the same idea, made a most successful display of the art treasures of their own and other guilds, and in that way deservedly acquired great renown amongst the most learned antiquaries and connoisseurs in art of this country. Why is the Corporation of London ever to follow in the rear, instead of leading the van, in matters so attractive to all thinking minds?

April 3, 1862. Report of the Committee, for increasing the allowance for the purchase of books for the Library from £200 to £300 per annum, and for authority to expend £50 in repairing and rebinding many valuable works. Agreed to.

May 28, 1863. Report on the reference to have reprinted the Book of Memoranda, &c., relating to the Royal Hospitals, and to send a copy thereof to each member of the Court. Agreed to.

July 23, 1863. The Committee reported upon the subject of an offer made by the authorities of the

Dutch Church, Austin Friars, to entrust their Library to the custody of the Corporation. Offer accepted, and directions given to acknowledge the same in suitable terms.

This priceless collection is thus described by our excellent Librarian, in an exhaustive report presented to the Committee:—

"The Library of the Dutch Church was founded in "1650, by *Marie Dubois;* some of the works having "been collected before that period. Great additions "have subsequently been made, the ministers of the "Church, the Dutch East-India Company, the mem- "bers of the congregation, and the Dutch ambassadors, "being the principal contributors. The index to the "manuscripts was made by *C. Calandrinus*, vicar of "*Stapleford* in *Essex*, abbot and minister of the Church.

"Besides the ancient manuscripts and early printed "books, there is a large collection of autograph letters, "the correspondence of some of the principal reformers "and founders of the Dutch republic.

"Amongst the former will be found the great names "of *Erasmus*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, the last-named being one of "the principal pillars of the early Church, who did "immense service to the Protestant cause; *Bucer*, who "came to *England* upon the invitation of archbishop "*Cranmer*, afterwards was appointed teacher of theo- "logy in the University of *Cambridge*, and rose high "in favour with *Edward* the Sixth;—*Peter Martyr*, dis- "tinguished both as a divine and as an author, who "was sent for by *Edward* the Sixth, and appointed "to the important position of Professor of Divinity at "*Oxford; Grindal*, Archbishop of *Canterbury*, who was "appointed by Queen *Elizabeth* to draw up the new

" liturgy, and preached before the Lord Mayor and " Aldermen at St. *Paul's*, when the Common Prayers " were first read; he was also one of the chief preachers " at St. *Paul's Cross*. *Viret*, the colleague of *Calvin; John* " *à Lasco*, first minister of the Dutch Church in *London:* " *Bullinger*, who so ably assisted the English divines " when they were compelled by the severities of Queen " *Mary* to seek refuge in *Switzerland*,—he also con- " futed the Pope's bull excommunicating Queen *Eliza-* " *beth;* and was held in high reputation in *England*, " many of his works being translated into English: " *Dathenus*, *John Fox* the martyrologist, and many " others.

" Amongst the latter are the original letters of the " illustrious Prince of *Orange*, afterwards *William* the " First; *Philip de Marnix* count of Sainte *Aldegonde*, " the Admiral of the Dutch fleet, and others referred " to by *Motley* in his history of the Dutch Republic.

" There is also another collection of two hundred " and seventy-two original communications, addressed " to *Abraham Ortelius*, geographer to *Philip* the Second " of *Spain*, from most of the learned scientific men of " that time; he was a considerable author of geogra- " phical works; several of the letters are accompanied " by engraved portraits of the writers: *Albert Durer's*, " being an etching of himself; a portrait of *Ortelius*, and " one of *Christopher Plantin*, the printer of the Poly- " glott Bible of Cardinal *Ximenes*, whose house at " *Antwerp* was the resort of the learned of all countries: " *Gerard Mercator*, cosmographer; he discovered many " important facts in this science, and gave his name to " the method of geographical projections: *William* " *Camden*, one of the most illustrious of English anti-

" quaries; Dr. *John Dee*, favourite of Queen *Elizabeth*,
" mathematician and astrologer; his geographical collec-
" tion is still preserved in the Cottonian Manuscripts at
" the British Museum: *Lobel*, physician to the same
" Queen; *Andrew Thevet; D. V. Cornhert*, secretary to
" the States of Holland; *Peiresc*, *Scaliger*, and many
" other celebrated characters of the fifteenth and six-
" teenth century; also letters and documents signed
" by Lords *Burleigh* and *Walsingham;* the Earls of
" *Leicester*, *Sussex*, and *Lincoln*, Lord *Bacon*, and other
" ministers; the Bishops and Lord Mayors of *London*.

" A Latin quarto Bible written upon vellum, with
" titles and beginning of chapters illuminated. Another
" Bible in Dutch, with illuminated titles, in two
" volumes, 1360; one printed at *Delf* in 1477, in Ger-
" man; some early folio editions of the Classics printed
" by *Stephanus;* a copy of an Embassy to China in
" 1670, with views of the numerous places and the
" manners and customs of the people. *Blaew's* views
" of the several towns and villages in the Low Coun-
" tries, printed in 1649.

" In the English collection are the works of the his-
" torians *Speed*, *Stow*, *Baker*, *Fox*, *Fuller*, *Stillingfleet*,
" and *Taylor*.

" One voluminous work, entitled *The Councils of the*
" *Church*, printed at *Paris* in 1644, thirty-seven volumes.

" The library is principally composed of valuable
" early theological works, printed in Latin, German,
" Dutch, and English. There are upwards of EIGHT
" HUNDRED WORKS, consisting of nearly TWO THOUSAND
" VOLUMES.

(I much regret to be compelled to add that the only

space available for the reception of these books was *a* **garret!!** however, suitable *cases* have been provided, and a sum of £300 expended upon the repairs necessary to the binding and preservation of the books.)

May 2, 1864. Letter from the Master of the Rolls for permission to have the Charter of William the Conqueror photographed, to form part of a work being published by the Government, containing specimens of documents of great national importance, from the Norman Conquest to the Accession of the House of Hanover. Referred to Library Committee to act therein as they may deem advisable.

Permission was granted, and the reader will be gratified to learn that the Charter referred to was selected to head this interesting collection.

December 15, 1864.—The Library Committee finding that the charters in the custody of the Town Clerk were not preserved with sufficient care, and that the large seals attached to them were being damaged by handling, applied to the Court for permission to obtain suitable cases for the same, by which these precious documents could be seen and perused, but not meddled with. This suggestion was complied with, and the charters have been very ingeniously displayed in metal trays glazed on both sides, with a socket for the seal.

February 23, 1865.—The following motion was discussed by the Court, and negatived:—

"That it be referred to the Library Committee to "inquire, and to report fully to this Court, whether it "be possible to unite under one roof the several im- "portant Libraries in the City of London, and espe- "cially those of the Corporation of London, the London "Institution, Sion College, and Dr. Williams's Library;

"and also to inquire of the several governing bodies "the terms and conditions upon which they may be "willing to join in the Union of the Libraries, without "disturbing the prescribed management and the re-"spective trusts, but rendering the whole easy of "access to the public."

Although this motion was not then successful, let but a structure be provided worthy of so desirable an amalgamation, and I shall not despair of its being ultimately effected.

March 23, 1865.—Upon the death of Mr. W. T. Alchin, who faithfully served the Corporation for nearly a quarter of a century, the Library Committee appointed, with the concurrence of the Common Council, Mr. W. H. Overall to be Librarian, at a salary of £200. This gentleman had previously rendered efficient services as Sub-Librarian for a period of eight years.

April 6, 1865.—The Court, on the recommendation of the Library Committee, authorized the purchase, for the sum of £200, of a private collection of Roman and Mediæval antiquities, selected with great care during the excavations carried on in the City of London for the last fifteen years.

July 6, 1865.—It was ordered that the dies of the Corporation medals be in future placed in the Library, and that new Members desirous of obtaining copies might, with the sanction of the Court, be permitted to do so, upon paying the cost of striking the same.

This motion resulted from an attempted act of Vandalism at a previous meeting, having for its object the destruction of these dies, which was very properly rejected.

April 19, 1866.—A letter from Messrs. Maull and Co. was laid before the Court, offering to present to the Corporation the portraits of the several Members and Officers exhibited in the Working Classes Industrial Exhibition, and also to render the series complete by adding thereto those of the other members not yet photographed.

The offer was accepted with thanks, and the portraits have been since received and arranged in portfolios.

Feb. 21, 1867.—The Library Committee reported on the proposal of Mr. Riley to compile a volume of extracts from the Corporation records from the ten early letter books in the possession of the Corporation, commencing A.D. 1275, Edward I., and ending A.D. 1459, 38th Henry VI., to consist of extracts translated from the original Latin and Anglo-Norman on the general history of England, and its commerce with France and Germany, Early City Biography, Manners and Customs, History of the Guilds, Mysteries, Crafts, and Companies:—of the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries.

April 4, 1867.—The following motion was agreed to by the Court:—

"That it be referred to the Library Committee "to consider as to the best means of providing in- "creased accommodation for the Library and Museum, "with authority to obtain plans and estimates for the "same, and to report thereon forthwith."

To this motion an amendment was moved that the word "*temporary*" be inserted after the word "*increased*," which was at once refused, the evident feeling of the Court being that, whatever changes were made, they must be of a *permanent* and *comprehensive* character.

May 14, 1868.—The Committee reported as follows: —"We have received from the Ward of Cheap a book "containing the minutes of its Wardmotes, from 1701 "to 1868, to be deposited for reference in the Library. "We directed the Town Clerk to ascertain from "the several other Wards and Parishes, whether "they would be willing to deposit their records "in the Library, not only for safe custody, but "also to secure archives of so much importance, for "historical research, whether local or national. As a "practical reply, your Committee have received "several important records, and other parishes in the "City have intimated a like desire, if the Corporation "would provide a fitting fire-proof receptacle for "them." (This want has since been supplied.)

But I have said enough concerning the disease, and will now foreshadow the remedy, dividing my suggestions into separate headings, for brevity's sake.

A Library, Museum, and Muniment Room should be at once erected upon the site selected by the Guildhall Improvement Committee, and should provide the following accommodation:—

I. The Library proper, divided into
   - *a.* Separate bays for the proper classification of the books.
   - *b.* Provision for quiet reading and study.
   - *c.* A Committee Room.
   - *d.* Lavatory and Water-closet.

II. The Museum, the cases in which should be

movable, for the purpose of its being readily adapted as a reception room on state occasions.*

III. A room to be used as a Library of Reference, free to all respectable persons desirous of making temporary use of dictionaries, maps, plans, works upon commerce, banking, &c., &c.†

IV. An Entrance Room, for making inquiries, changing books, &c., without disturbing the readers in the library.

V. A room for the Library of the Dutch Church.

VI. Muniment Rooms.‡

These several works, Mr. Architect informs me, could be commenced six months after any given quarter-day, which time would suffice to obtain possession of the site, and they would cost £25,000 for the Library and Museum, about £3,000 more for fitting up the same, and a further sum of £2,000 if muniment rooms be included.

* It is now generally admitted that all antiquities should be kept near the locality in which they are discovered; and it has long been a subject of reproach to the Corporation that valuable specimens have been removed to the Bodleian Library at Oxford, the British Museum, and other places. I have no doubt that many private collections will be offered for our acceptance when a suitable place is prepared to receive and exhibit them; indeed, I have been offered such already.

† Such a room exists in most large towns, and is much frequented by merchants, traders, and others.

‡ The present muniment rooms are hourly exposed to the risk of fire, large furnaces, which heat the various offices, &c., being placed immediately outside the doors leading to them. This applies to those of the Chamberlain, Comptroller, and Town Clerk, and those appropriating to the latter officer have, in addition, a large hot-air flue running completely through them.

By their erection we should, in addition to our new Library, possess in the Museum a magnificent Reception Room, thereby obviating the necessity of any outbuilding on Lord Mayor's day, or other state occasions, which I have shown at the outset to be so costly.

I feel the less diffidence in offering the above suggestions from the fact, that at the last meeting of the Library Committee, when the reference for providing increased accommodation was before them, the whole subject was carefully inquired into, and, Mr. Architect being heard thereon, it was unanimously determined, ***"That it is not desirable to expend any further sums of money in the adaptation of "buildings which are totally inadequate to "the wants and requirements of the Library "and Museum."***

If any further evidence be needed to convince the most sceptical of the paramount necessity for such a building, it will be found in the following Report of an independent Committee :—

December 13, 1866. The *Guildhall Improvement Committee* delivered in a Report, with a plan and estimate for a proposed *New Library*, at an expense of £25,000 exclusive of fittings, including the amount granted 31st July, 1862. The Report goes on (after alluding to the restoration of the Hall) to remark on the necessity for a new Libary in the following terms :—

"We had our attention primarily directed to the "pressing necessity of making provision for the in- "creasingly inadequate accommodation at present "provided for the Guildhall Library. Since its founda- "tion in 1824, the Library has been steadily increasing, "until at the present time it consists of one of the most

"valuable assortments of works of standard literature "to be found in the country.

"Whilst this cannot but be a subject of satisfaction "to your Honourable Court, it must render it apparent "that the accommodation which amply sufficed for the "comparatively small collection which was possessed "at the formation of the Library, must be now pro- "portionately inadequate to meet the growing demands "for further space; and not only is more room required "for the reception of the increasing number of books, "but the insufficiency of the accommodation provided "for the visitors, whose numbers become annually "larger, has long been severely felt.

"That your Honourable Court appreciated the "necessity of making some provision for this state of "things is evident, by your having so far back as the "31*st July*, 1862, agreed to the Report of the City "Lands Committee, recommending (*inter alia*) the "alteration and adaptation of the rooms over the Comp- "troller's Offices for the purposes of the Library, at "an expense of £2,300; and this Report has been re- "ferred to your Committee for execution.

"It will be in the memory of the Court, that in the "year 1863 they undertook the charge of the unique "and valuable collection of works in the custody of the "authorities of the Dutch Church, *Austin Friars*, agree- "ing to the stipulation that a separate room should be "set apart for its reception. Appreciating, therefore, "the necessity of carrying out the agreement made "with the authorities of the Dutch Church, and re- "membering that your Honourable Court has recently "purchased two collections of Antiquities to be added "to the already valuable one in the Museum attached

"to the Library, your Committee felt that the addition "proposed in the Report of the City Lands Committee "would but temporarily, and even then very imper- "fectly, meet the present and future requirements of "the Library; and we therefore directed the City's "Architect to prepare and submit to us designs and "an estimate for the erection of a new building, "which should give ample space both for the recep- "tion of books and antiquities and the accommodation "of visitors. He has accordingly laid before us a "ground-plan of the present arrangement of the Guild- "hall and offices, providing for the erection of a new "Library and Museum on the ground between the "eastern end of the Hall and *Basinghall* street.

"The new building will contain a basement floor, "with an area of 9,000 superficial feet; a ground floor, "which will be used as the Museum, with a like area; "and an upper floor, which will be devoted to the pur- "poses of the Library, and will contain an area of 6,000 "superficial feet. On this floor it is proposed to erect a "gallery, which will materially contribute to the space "required for the reception of the books.

"We have further received from the Architect a "Report, in which he estimates the cost of building a "new Library and Museum, exclusive of fittings, at the "sum of £25,000; but, being already authorized in "carrying out the Report of the City Lands Committee "to expend the sum of £2,300 in the improvement of "the present Library, the amount actually required "will be only £22,700.

"We trust that the reasons we have adduced for "turning our attention, in the first place, to the recon- 'struction of the Library will meet with the approval

"of your Honourable Court; and feeling assured that "you would desire that the present large and highly "interesting collections in the Library and Museum "should be deposited in a building commensurate with "their value, and worthy of the Corporation of the "City of *London*, we recommend that we should be "authorized to obtain more detailed designs and plans "for the erection of a new Library and Museum in "accordance with the ground-plan now submitted to "the Court, and to carry out the works in conformity "therewith, at an expense, exclusive of fittings, of "£25,000, including the sum already granted by the "Court for the improvement of the present building."

This Report was never considered by the Court of Common Council; and the fate of that portion of it which recommended the erection of a new Library was involved in the common ruin occasioned by the sudden collapse of the Guildhall Improvement Committee, from causes it is not my province to inquire into. The question before us, therefore, has never been discussed, and the Court is free to enter upon its examination unfettered by any previously pronounced opinion of its merits.

That no misapprehension may exist upon this point, I have sought and obtained the sanction of the present Chief Commoner to say, that the recent motion to discharge the wide reference made to the City Lands Committee (for the reconstruction of the whole of the Guildhall buildings) was not in any way intended to prejudice the question before us.

CONCLUSION.

I have now brought this brief historical retrospect up to a period within the memory of almost the youngest member of the Court of Common Council. Want of space has necessitated the omission of several reports and motions relating to the internal management of the Library, additions to the Museum, and other matters of interest, but I hope I have included all that is essential to my purpose. I have endeavoured to show the gradual rise and progress of our Library from its infancy, the estimation in which it ever has been and still is held by the educated section of society, as seen by the constant applications to profit by its treasures from our own and Foreign Governments (whose costly donations have been duly noticed)—from the British Museum, and kindred institutions—from individuals holding the highest rank amongst the learned men of the civilized world, and by the steadily increasing numbers of it readers and visitors. I have traced the gradual development of the work from its early beginning to its more vigorous condition, and have, I venture to think, done full justice to the exertions of the few brave men who have breasted the waves of incapacity and obstructiveness. It now remains to refer to the action of the Court itself; and, although I cannot honestly say much in commendation of its liberality with respect to the Library, I may concede to it a desire to do something, if not all one could have

wished. Its grants of money, if they have not gone *pari passu* with the wants of the Library, have nevertheless, of later days, proved its anxiety to meet, in some degree, the requirements of the times, and encourage the belief that, with fuller information and more exact data, the present race of Councillors will cheerfully support an attempt to clear the Corporation of London from all reproach on this head. Since 1835, the question of increased accommodation has been repeatedly pressed upon the notice of the Court. In that year, the sum of £2,721 3s. was expended upon the present narrow and ill-adapted corridor, which, forsooth, we call our Library, by Mr. Mountague, who appears to have been smitten with Soane-ian ideas of architecture; and in April, 1861, the Court voted the sum of £3,000 for alterations, which, if they had been carried out, would have been not only useless, but mischievous. It is not by tinkerings like these that we can hope to meet our present needs; we must go further, or——close our Library.

I have spoken fearlessly and earnestly, and have not shrunk from censure where it has appeared to me due; but I should deeply regret if aught that I have written should appear unjust or harsh. My great aim has been to show that, whilst we have amassed inestimable literary treasures, which attract the notice of the *literati* of modern times, our means of *displaying* and *utilizing* them are contemptible.

To appreciate the benefits conferred on the citizens of London by the various committees to whom the literary reputation of their ancient City has been entrusted, it is necessary to reflect upon the condition of things existing at the time when Mr. Lambert Jones

and his coadjutors opened the first trenches against the citadel of ignorance; and if the progress of this siege has been slow, let us not forget that there were many outworks of prejudice to demolish. The stronghold has fallen with this happy circumstance, that the besieged are willing to go hand in hand with the besiegers, and the only question now is, how the great objects in view can be accomplished. Much has been achieved, and the reward the diligent labourers ask for is, that the Corporation of London will respond to the cravings of every wise and thoughtful man, that the Capital of this vast empire may be the *Capital of Intelligence.* It is no extravagant thought that, if the exertions made in 1824 had never taken place, if the stolid apathy with which the Records had been allowed to rot in destructive obscurity had not been disturbed, in a few years more not a vestige, not a shred, would have remained of these monuments of the better taste and feeling of our "*benighted forefathers:*" all would have passed into the limbo of *good intentions*, and the City of London would have well merited the obloquy which her foes now unjustly cast upon her. Toiling through the various reports which have been presented by the Library Committee to the Court of Common Council, we cannot but admire the patience and well-directed zeal with which so many gentlemen, with pressing claims on their time, have devoted days and weeks and months to the accomplishment of an object from which they could personally expect no other reward than that which arises from the consciousness of duty well discharged. Let *us* emulate these beneficent labours, let *us* show our gratitude to the memory of these public benefactors, by putting the finishing

hand to the work they have well begun and so ardently pursued, and as they have done *their* part by initiating and protecting, so let us do *ours* by a happy consummation and realization of their desires—*they* have amassed the intellectual food, be it *our* business to find a fitting storehouse, whence it may be dispensed to all who hunger after it.

To go further into details of the efforts made by other municipalities would be waste of time. I prefer to rest my claims on their own merits. *Sarcasm* had reached its climax when the Report from the Select Committee appointed by Parliament on Public Libraries in London (1849) passed over the Guildhall Library as scarcely worthy of notice.

We have made good progress since. Twenty years of able administration has placed our Library, so far as its *contents* are concerned, in the foremost rank amongst cognate institutions. This ought to give us nerve to persevere and relax not until the *Library of the Corporation of the City of London* is an established fact, as one of the *finest*, *most commodious*, and *best furnished* repositories of learning in the world.

W. S. S.

13, Queen Street, Cheapside,
26*th June*, 1869.

APPENDIX.

Statement of the number of works presented to and purchased for the Library, together with those supplied from the reading-room, from the year 1855 to the year 1868 inclusive; the number of works issued to members of the Court, the number of visitors to the Library, and works consulted by them from its commencement in the year 1857 to the year 1868 inclusive.

Year.	Presented.		Purchased.		Supplied from Reading-room.		Supplied from Remembrancer's Office.	Total.		Works issued to Members.	Visitors to Library.	Works of Reference consulted.
	Works.	Vols.	Works.	Vols.	Works.	Vols.	Vols.	Works.	Vols.			
1855	58	62	11	15	28	35	—	97	112	—	—	—
1856	27	39	9	16	29	36	—	65	91	—	—	—
*1857	25	43	57	124	32	28	—	114	195	548	801	519
1858	43	49	102	171	31	36	—	176	256	1,592	2,314	1,632
1859	89	112	337	642	34	40	—	460	794	2,038	3,617	3,198
1860	48	518	142	284	32	41	149	222	992	2,478	6,891	6,427
1861	69	124	106	264	38	45	20	213	453	2,103	7,912	9,508
1862	53	95	220	332	40	47	144	313	518	2,510	10,267	11,622
1863	65	110	94	156	30	39	142	189	447	3,181	8,177	10,713
1864	83	137	210	290	35	40	40	328	407	2,953	9,038	13,868
†1865	92	124	220	414	36	42	68	348	648	2,819	7,609	13,196
1866	97	108	371	463	39	54	70	507	695	3,526	12,149	20,823
1867	111	130	280	358	44	71	66	435	625	3,402	13,535	25,170
1868	133	161	226	297	41	76	81	400	615	3,095	14,316	28,424

The total number of volumes now contained in the Library, including that of the Dutch Church, is about 30,000, besides a large collection of maps, plans, prints, drawings, and portraits.

* Until the establishment of the Circulating Library in June, 1857, no account of the number of visitors or works consulted was kept in the Library.

† This return does not include the Dutch Library.

LONDON :

W. H. AND L. COLLINGRIDGE, CITY PRESS,

ALDERSGATE STREET, E.C.